

INNATE INTELLIGENCE IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHIROPRACTIC: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Adrian B. Wenban, BSc(Anat), BAppSc(Chiro), MMedSc(Clin Epi), PGrDip(Med Ed)¹, Francine L. Denis, DC²

ABSTRACT

Objective: To examine how 9 influential chiropractic authors have conceptualized Innate Intelligence, tracing its evolution from D.D. Palmer's foundational formulation through diverse subsequent interpretations, and to identify patterns of convergence, divergence, and transformation in this core chiropractic construct.

Methods: Authors were broadly screened and then purposively sampled using maximum variation sampling combined with critical case sampling strategies. A qualitative, historical-philosophical methodology was employed to conduct comparative textual analysis of primary works by those authors who meet the purposive sampling inclusion criteria. Each author's conceptualization of Innate Intelligence was systematically analyzed regarding definition, characteristics, relationship to Universal Intelligence, clinical application, and epistemological approach.

Results: Nine out of an initial pool of 18 authors met the purposive sampling inclusion criteria: D.D. Palmer (1910), Ralph W. Stephenson (1927), B.J. Palmer (1949), Reginald Gold (1984), Joseph B. Strauss (1991), Ian D. Coulter (1999), Joseph C. Keating Jr. (2005), David Koch (2008), and Simon A. Senzon (2011). Analysis revealed a complex spectrum from Palmer's explicitly spiritual understanding of Innate Intelligence as the "soul" through Stephenson's systematic codification, Gold's vitalistic traditionalism, Keating's critical historical analysis, Koch's integrated approach, to Senzon's contemporary naturalistic interpretation emphasizing systems biology and emergence. Key tensions emerged between maintaining Palmer's vitalistic foundations

versus achieving academic legitimacy through scientific language, with Keating representing scholarly critique and Koch attempting synthesis. All authors except Keating and Coulter retained the concept as clinically central while diverging substantially in metaphysical commitments.

Discussion: The evolution demonstrates another example of "The Palmer Paradox" whereby each author's attempt to preserve chiropractic's philosophical distinctiveness while adapting to evolving contexts has produced interpretations differing fundamentally from D.D. Palmer's original vision. The analysis reveals three distinct trajectories: vitalistic preservation (B.J. Palmer, Gold), systematic codification (Stephenson, Strauss), and academic translation (Coulter, Keating, Koch, Senzon). Keating's critical historical perspective provides unique meta-level analysis, treating Innate Intelligence as object of scholarly investigation rather than professional commitment. The progression reveals systematic secularization, increased systematization, and movement from experiential knowing through logical frameworks to empirical inquiry.

Conclusion: While Innate Intelligence remains rhetorically central to much of the philosophy of chiropractic, its meaning has transformed substantially across nine major authors. Understanding this evolution illuminates ongoing debates about chiropractic identity, scope of practice, and philosophical foundations. The analysis suggests that meaningful engagement with philosophy of chiropractic requires acknowledging both historical continuity and substantive conceptual change, with particular attention to the epistemological diversity represented across vitalistic commitment, systematic codification, critical scholarship, and naturalistic reinterpretation. (*J Contemporary Chiropr* 2026;9:185-206)

¹ College of Advanced Healthcare Sciences (CAHS), ² Barcelona College of Chiropractic

Key Indexing Terms: Chiropractic; Philosophy; Innate Intelligence; Vitalism; Comparative Analysis; Metaphysics; Professional Identity; Conceptual Evolution

INTRODUCTION

Innate Intelligence stands as perhaps the most clinically significant concept in philosophy of chiropractic, directly linking the profession's metaphysical foundations to its therapeutic practices. While Universal Intelligence addresses the organizing principle governing the cosmos, Innate Intelligence particularizes this principle within individual living organisms, providing chiropractic's theoretical justification for spinal adjustment and its claimed health benefits. (1,2) Understanding how this concept has evolved across diverse interpretations illuminates fundamental tensions within chiropractic regarding professional identity, scope of practice, and philosophical commitments.

D.D. Palmer introduced Innate Intelligence as "the Soul, Spirit, or Spark of Life" - an explicitly spiritual conceptualization linking individual vitality to Universal Intelligence. (1) For Palmer, Innate Intelligence represented the individualized expression of divine wisdom within each organism, maintaining health through perfect coordination of bodily functions. Vertebral subluxation, by interfering with nerve transmission, impeded Innate Intelligence's expression, thereby causing disease. This formulation established the philosophical foundation for chiropractic's distinctive therapeutic approach.

Subsequent authors have wrestled with Palmer's legacy through remarkably diverse strategies as revealed in a recent comparative analysis related to how authors have maintained but altered conceptual characteristics of Universal Intelligence. (3) That analysis suggested some, like Reginald Gold (1984), intensified vitalistic commitments while refining clinical application. Others, like Ralph Stephenson (1927) and Joseph Strauss (1991), systematized Palmer's insights into coherent logical frameworks. Still others, like Joseph C. Keating Jr. (2005) and Ian Coulter (1999), adopted scholarly distance, analyzing Innate Intelligence as historical artifact rather than metaphysical reality. Contemporary authors like David Koch (2008) and Simon Senzon (2011) attempt synthesis, reinterpreting traditional concepts through modern biology while maintaining clinical relevance.

Vitalism: Conceptual Foundation

Innate Intelligence represents chiropractic's expression of vitalism—the philosophical position that living organisms possess organizing principles fundamentally different from non-living matter. (4) Classical vitalism, from Aristotle's *entelechy* to Bergson's *élan vital*, held that life transcends purely mechanical explanation. (5,6) Within chiropractic, this manifests as Innate Intelligence: an inherent organizing intelligence maintaining bodily coordination, self-healing, and adaptation. (1,2)

For this analysis, vitalism refers to interpretive frameworks attributing organizing or healing capacities to non-material principles within living systems. Authors' positions along a vitalistic-to-naturalistic spectrum reflect whether they treat Innate Intelligence as irreducible metaphysical reality or as metaphorical representation of biological processes. This spectrum captures the central tension: maintaining philosophical distinctiveness while achieving professional legitimacy within scientific healthcare.

Conceptual Clarifications

This analysis employs several key philosophical terms requiring explicit definition:

Metaphysical refers to interpretations positioning Innate Intelligence as a non-material reality or organizing principle that exists beyond physical-chemical processes. Metaphysical approaches treat Innate Intelligence as an actual entity or force, whether natural (immanent in biological systems) or supernatural (deriving from external divine sources).

Spiritual specifically denotes interpretations connecting Innate Intelligence to divine or transcendent sources. Spiritual interpretations position Innate as the "personified portion of Universal Intelligence" (1) or as manifestation of divine wisdom within individual organisms. This represents a subset of metaphysical interpretations.

Supernatural denotes interpretations deriving Innate Intelligence from sources external to natural order—divine, transcendent, or spiritual forces beyond material causation.

Secular/Secularism denotes interpretations removing supernatural or spiritual dimensions while potentially retaining metaphysical commitments.

These distinctions prove essential because evolutionary

trajectories include: (1) supernatural-spiritual (D.D. Palmer, early B.J. Palmer), (2) metaphysical-but-not-supernatural (Strauss), (3) secular-but-metaphysical (Koch's earlier work), and (4) fully naturalized (Coulter, Keating, aspects of Senzon).

This diversity raises fundamental questions about conceptual continuity: to what extent do modern formulations preserve Palmer's original insights versus constituting essentially different concepts sharing only a name? Does the progression from Palmer's mystical soul through Stephenson's organizational law to Senzon's emergent property represent refinement of a single concept or successive replacement by fundamentally different ideas? How do we understand authors like Keating who analyze rather than affirm the concept, or Gold who preserves vitalistic tradition against scientific critique?

This analysis aims to examine how influential authors, spanning the first approximately 100 years following the publication of DD Palmer's 1910 text, have conceptualized Innate Intelligence.

METHODS

Identification of Candidate Authors

An initial pool of candidate authors was identified through comprehensive examination of the chiropractic philosophy-related literature. This involved citation analysis of major chiropractic philosophy texts and review articles to identify frequently referenced authors on Innate Intelligence, examination of philosophy course syllabi from chiropractic educational institutions, review of scholarly journals publishing philosophical work (including the *Journal of Chiropractic Humanities* and *Chiropractic History*), and consultation with the scholarly literature on chiropractic's intellectual history. Authors were included in the candidate pool if they had published substantive work explicitly addressing Innate Intelligence as a conceptual framework. This identification process yielded 18 candidate authors who had published work on Innate Intelligence spanning chiropractic's history from 1910 to 2011. These 18 candidates were then systematically evaluated against the inclusion criteria described below.

Selection Rationale and Boundaries

Author selection focused on figures who substantively developed or interpreted Innate Intelligence as a philosophical construct rather than those who

primarily critiqued, historicized, or observed it from only external perspectives. Broadly, we included authors who: (1) Advanced substantive interpretations of Innate Intelligence as a viable concept within chiropractic philosophy, (2) Produced primary source material significantly influencing how the concept was understood and applied, and (3) Represented distinct interpretive trajectories contributing to maximum variation sampling.

This sampling strategy enabled analysis of how key developers shaped Innate Intelligence's meaning through distinct interpretive frameworks rather than how critics debated legitimacy, historians traced genealogy, external observers documented professional evolution, or how the concept was taught to subsequent generations.

Those authors that satisfied the above broad sampling strategy were then further sampled purposively using maximum variation sampling combined with critical case sampling strategies. (7) Maximum variation sampling ensured capture of the full range of interpretive diversity regarding Innate Intelligence, while critical case sampling ensured inclusion of historically and theoretically essential voices. Six primary selection criteria guided author inclusion: (1) Historical representation - authors must collectively span chiropractic's history from founding (1910) through contemporary period (2011); (2) Philosophical diversity - representing the full spectrum including vitalism/spiritualism, systematic codification, critical analysis, and naturalistic reinterpretation; (3) Professional influence - demonstrably influenced professional discourse through citation frequency, educational use, or practitioner adoption; (4) Conceptual systematization - providing systematic, extended treatment with explicit definition and implications; (5) Theoretical contribution - introducing novel interpretation or definitive formulation; (6) Epistemological diversity - representing different approaches to knowing including mystical/intuitive, deductive/rationalist, empirical/scientific, and critical/historical methods.

Following the purposive sampling this study employed qualitative historical-philosophical methodology to conduct comparative textual analysis of primary sources. The approach combined historical scholarship's attention to context with philosophical analysis's conceptual precision, enabling systematic comparison while respecting historical particularity. (8)

RESULTS

The initial pool of candidate authors included 18 authors.

Seven of those authors (9-16) were excluded because they primarily critiqued, historicized, or observed Innate Intelligence from external perspectives rather than substantively developing interpretations as a viable philosophical construct: Historical-genealogical analysts [Donahue (9,10), Morgan (11), Jackson (12)] who traced conceptual lineage or examined "origins and problems" rather than developing interpretations. Jackson (12) traced Innate Intelligence's ancestry in vis medicatrix naturae and vital force traditions. Morgan (11) characterized the concept as an "untestable enigma" impeding professional acceptance. Donahue explicitly argued "the case against Innate Intelligence." (10) External observers [Morinis (13), Kaptchuk (14)] who documented chiropractic from outside the profession. Morinis, a medical anthropologist, examined chiropractic's professional evolution from a sociological perspective. (13) Kaptchuk, a Harvard Medical School physician, documented professional tensions as an external medical observer. (14) Methodological critics [McAulay (18)] who critiqued philosophical discourse methods rather than developing conceptual interpretations and recent synthesizers [Sinnott (16)] who compiled existing philosophy pedagogically.

Application of Selection Criteria

The remaining 11 authors underwent purposive sampling based on a maximum variation strategy led to the systematic evaluation against the 6 inclusion criteria described in Methods. This evaluation process is documented in Table 1 for the 11 candidates. Nine authors met all inclusion criteria and were included in the study: D.D. Palmer (1910); Ralph W. Stephenson (1927); B.J. Palmer (1949); Reginald Gold (1984); Joseph B. Strauss (1991); Ian D. Coulter (1999); Joseph C. Keating Jr. (2005); David Koch (2008); and Simon A. Senzon (2011).

Authors Examined but Excluded

Two of the 11 prominent figures in chiropractic history who were examined for potential inclusion did not meet our inclusion criteria. The 2 influential educators and leaders—Virgil Strang (17) and Joseph Janse (18)—were systematically evaluated against the 6 criteria (Table 1). While historically prominent, both lacked sufficient published scholarly work specifically developing distinct interpretations of Innate Intelligence

that would contribute unique variation to our sample. This demonstrates systematic application of inclusion criteria rather than selection based solely on historical prominence.

Table 1: Author Selection Criteria Evaluation

Author	Hist. Rep.	Phil. Div.	Prof. Infl.	System.	Theor. Contrib.	Epist. Div.	Decision
D.D. Palmer (1)	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	INCLUDE
Stephenson (2)	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	INCLUDE
B.J. Palmer (20)	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	INCLUDE
Gold (22)	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	INCLUDE
Strauss (23)	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	INCLUDE
Coulter (25)	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	INCLUDE
Keating (26)	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	INCLUDE
Koch (28)	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	INCLUDE
Senzon (29)	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	INCLUDE
Strang (7)*	✓	×	✓	~	×	×	EXCLUDE
Janse (8)*	✓	×	✓✓	×	×	×	EXCLUDE

* Authors considered but excluded based on insufficient published scholarly work developing distinct interpretations of Innate Intelligence.

** Additional authors examined but excluded even before purposive sampling: Historical-genealogical analysts (Donahue, Morgan, Jackson); External observers (Morinis, Kaptchuk); Methodological critics (McAulay); Recent synthesizers (Sinnott). See Methods section for detailed explanation.

Legend: ✓✓ = Strongly Meets; ✓ = Meets; ~ = Partially Meets; × = Does Not Meet.

Sample Characteristics

The 9 included authors span 101 years (1910–2011) and encompass both practitioners and academic scholars, providing comprehensive coverage across three distinct interpretive trajectories: vitalistic preservation (D.D. Palmer, B.J. Palmer, Gold), systematic codification (Stephenson, Strauss), and academic translation subdividing into critical analysis (Coulter, Keating) and naturalistic reinterpretation (Koch, Senzon).

Purposive sampling based on a maximum variation strategy led to the systematic evaluation of 11 authors against 6 criteria. Nine of the 11 authors met the inclusion criteria and were included in the study (see Table 1): D.D. Palmer (1910) representing foundational

vitalism; Ralph W. Stephenson (1927) representing systematic codification; B.J. Palmer (1949) representing mystical intensification; Reginald Gold (1984) representing vitalistic traditionalism; Joseph B. Strauss (1991) representing modern orthodox interpretation; Ian D. Coulter (1999) representing academic historical analysis; Joseph C. Keating Jr. (2005) representing critical scholarly perspective; David Koch (2008) representing integrative synthesis; and Simon A. Senzon (2011) representing contemporary evolutionary naturalism. This selection provided comprehensive coverage across 3 distinct interpretive trajectories: vitalistic preservation (D.D. Palmer, B.J. Palmer, Gold), systematic codification (Stephenson, Strauss), and academic translation subdividing into critical analysis (Coulter, Keating) and naturalistic reinterpretation (Koch, Senzon). The 9 authors related work spans 101 years and encompass both practitioners and academic scholars.

The remainder of this Results section systematically presents each of the included author's conceptualization of Innate Intelligence, examining definitions, key characteristics, relationships to Universal Intelligence, clinical applications, and notable convergences with or divergences from Palmer's foundational vision. The analysis proceeds chronologically to illuminate the concept's historical evolution across the 9 major interpreters.

D.D. Palmer (1)(1910): Innate Intelligence as Soul and Spiritual Vitality

Definition and Nature: D.D. Palmer conceptualized Innate Intelligence as "the Soul, Spirit, or Spark of Life" that "controls and directs all the vital functions of human life." (1) This explicitly spiritual formulation positioned Innate Intelligence as individualized Universal Intelligence – the divine wisdom particularized within each organism. Palmer wrote: "Innate is a segment of that Intelligence which fills the universe", establishing ontological continuity between cosmic and organismic intelligence.

For Palmer, Innate Intelligence possessed personal agency and intentionality. He described it as "all wise" and "all knowing," attributes suggesting not merely organizational capacity but conscious intelligence. This anthropomorphic characterization reflected Palmer's belief that the same divine intelligence pervading the cosmos manifested personally within each living being, maintaining health through perfect coordination of bodily functions.

Key Characteristics: Palmer attributed several crucial

characteristics to Innate Intelligence. First, it operated through the nervous system, with the brain serving as "the dwelling place of Innate Intelligence." Second, it possessed complete knowledge of bodily needs but was limited in expression by matter – what Palmer called "limitations of matter." Third, it was inherently perfect and infallible in its knowledge, with all disease arising from interference with its expression rather than from errors in Innate's wisdom. Fourth, it operated automatically and subconsciously, distinguishing it from educated intelligence (conscious thought).

Clinical Significance: Palmer's conceptualization directly grounded chiropractic's therapeutic rationale. Vertebral subluxation produced disease by interfering with nerve transmission, thereby impeding Innate Intelligence's expression. The adjustment removed this interference, allowing Innate to resume normal function and restore health. Palmer wrote: "The function of the nerves is to carry Innate mental impulses from the brain to all portions of the body... Any interference with transmission of nerve force results in deranged action, disease". This framework made the chiropractor a facilitator of Innate Intelligence rather than a healer.

Epistemological Approach: Palmer claimed knowledge of Innate Intelligence through experiential and intuitive means. He described his initial understanding as coming through spiritual insight: "The knowledge of the existence of Innate Intelligence came to me in an instant, like a flash of light". This mystical epistemology emphasized direct apprehension over systematic argumentation, establishing Innate Intelligence as reality requiring spiritual receptivity rather than merely logical comprehension. There is, however, evidence that D.D. Palmer's conceptualization of Innate Intelligence drew substantially from the Harmonial Philosophy tradition, particularly Andrew Jackson Davis's work "The Physician, Volume 1 of The Great Harmonia," (19) which was in Palmer's library. Davis's framework—that health results from uninterrupted flow of life spirit, disease from disturbances in this flow, and the body possesses inherent healing capacity¹⁹—provided philosophical scaffolding for Palmer's Innate Intelligence concept. Thus, while Palmer claimed experiential and intuitive validation, his conceptual framework reflected significant literary and philosophical influence from Harmonial traditions.

Ralph W. Stephenson (2)(1927): Systematic Codification and the 33 Principles

Definition and Systematization: Stephenson transformed Palmer's mystical formulation into

systematic framework, defining Innate Intelligence through his famous 33 principles. Principle 20 states: "A living thing has an inborn intelligence within its body, called Innate Intelligence." (2) His most significant contribution was articulating Innate Intelligence's function with unprecedented precision: "The function of Innate Intelligence is to adapt universal forces and matter for use in the body, so that all parts of the body will have co-ordinated action for mutual benefit" (Principle 23).

Stephenson defined the Triune of Life as the essential components of all living things: Intelligence, Force, and Matter (Article 312). (2) Universal Intelligence, Innate Intelligence, and Educated Intelligence represent different types or expressions of intelligence operating within this single Triune structure, not separate triunes. Universal Intelligence represents the organizing principle in all matter throughout the universe. Innate Intelligence represents this organizing principle as it manifests within living organisms. Educated Intelligence represents the conscious, volitional aspect of mind developed through learning and experience.

Clinical Application: Stephenson directly connected his systematic framework to clinical practice through the concept of "transmission of mental impulses" – nerve energy generated by Innate Intelligence to coordinate bodily functions. Vertebral subluxation caused "interference with the transmission of Innate forces", producing "incoordination" and disease. This mechanistic language represented notable shift from Palmer's spiritual terminology, though Stephenson likely maintained vitalistic understanding beneath the systematic surface.

Stephenson made a crucial distinction between dis-ease (lack of ease or incoordination within the body resulting from nerve interference) and disease (named pathological conditions recognized by medicine). (2) Dis-ease, in Stephenson's framework, represents the body's compensatory response to subluxation interfering with Innate Intelligence's transmission of mental impulses, whereas disease represents the eventual manifestation when adaptive capacity is exceeded (pp. 80, 82, 143, 156, 301). (2)

Convergences and Divergences: Stephenson preserved several crucial elements of Palmer's vision: Innate Intelligence's perfection and infallibility; its operation through the nervous system; the primacy of nerve interference in dis-ease causation; and chiropractic adjustment as removing interference. However, his

interpretation diverged through emphasis on deductive logic over experiential mysticism, reduction of explicitly spiritual language, and transformation of Innate Intelligence from mystical reality requiring spiritual apprehension into logical construct accessible through rational analysis.

B.J. Palmer (20,21)(1910-1961): Mystical Intensification and Technological Integration

Definition and Nature: B.J. Palmer inherited and intensified his father's conceptualization of Innate Intelligence, transforming it from one element within chiropractic philosophy into its singular defining principle. Like D.D. Palmer, B.J. positioned Innate as the "personified portion of Universal Intelligence,"¹ but elevated this concept to mystical-spiritual dimensions that distinguished chiropractic categorically from all other healing approaches. B.J.'s formulation emphasized Innate Intelligence as the supreme organizing and healing force, positioning the chiropractor not as healer but as facilitator removing interference to Innate's perfect expression. (20)

B.J. developed the concept of "mental impulse" as the mechanism through which Innate Intelligence coordinates bodily function. Mental impulses, distinct from mere nerve signals, represented Innate Intelligence's instructions transmitted through the nervous system to maintain "active organization" and coordinate all physiological processes. Subluxation, in B.J.'s framework, constituted interference with mental impulse transmission, thereby disrupting Innate Intelligence's ability to maintain health. (18,19)

Epistemological Approach: B.J. Palmer claimed direct revelatory insight into Innate Intelligence's nature and function. He described himself as facilitator for Innate Intelligence's expression, positioning his understanding as deriving from spiritual illumination rather than solely philosophical reasoning or empirical observation. This mystical epistemology distinguished B.J.'s approach from his father's more eclectic philosophical framework, establishing what critics characterized as quasi-religious authority for chiropractic philosophy. (9)

However, B.J. simultaneously pursued technological-scientific validation, creating instruments to "objectively" measure nerve interference and subluxation. This paradoxical combination—mystical revelation coupled with technological measurement—characterized B.J.'s epistemological approach throughout his career.

Clinical Application and Technological Integration:

B.J. Palmer's clinical application of Innate Intelligence theory evolved significantly throughout his career. He emphasized the "four components of the vertebral subluxation": (1) kinesiopathology (abnormal motion/position), (2) neuropathology (nerve interference), (3) histopathology (tissue changes), and (4) pathophysiology (altered function)—with interference to mental impulse transmission representing the critical fourth component linking subluxation to Innate Intelligence theory. (20)

B.J. developed multiple instruments to detect and analyze subluxation, most notably the electroencephaloneuromyotomograph (EENM), which he positioned as objective measurement of mental impulse interference. (21) The EENM represented B.J.'s conviction that spiritual principles could be demonstrated through scientific instrumentation—that Innate Intelligence's expression through the nervous system could be measured and documented objectively. These technological developments reflected his attempt to bridge mystical philosophy and scientific methodology.

B.J.'s clinical philosophy centered on "above-down, inside-out" (21)—the principle that healing flows from Innate Intelligence within the body (inside) through the nervous system (down) to peripheral tissues, rather than from external therapeutic interventions. This positioned the chiropractor's role as purely facilitative: removing nerve interference to enable Innate Intelligence's perfect expression. The adjustment, in B.J.'s framework, constituted the exclusive legitimate therapeutic intervention because it alone addressed the cause of dis-ease (nerve interference) rather than treating effects (symptoms or pathology).

Convergences and Divergences with D.D. Palmer

B.J. Palmer both preserved and transformed his father's concept of Innate Intelligence, creating divergences that profoundly shaped chiropractic's professional development. Both positioned Innate as the "personified portion of Universal Intelligence" maintaining health through nerve system coordination. (1) Both emphasized subluxation as interference with this organizing intelligence. However, significant divergences emerged in scope, intensity, and epistemological approach.

D.D. Palmer developed Innate Intelligence within the broader Harmonial Philosophy context (19), emphasizing integration with Universal Intelligence and positioning chiropractic among diverse healing traditions that recognized the body's inherent recuperative powers.

D.D. advocated broader therapeutic scope including "adjusting, heat, cold, exercise, rest, and other natural methods." (1) His approach balanced metaphysical commitment with therapeutic pragmatism.

B.J. Palmer intensified the mystical-spiritual dimensions while restricting therapeutic scope. He increasingly elevated Innate Intelligence to exclusive therapeutic principle, arguing that "above-down, inside-out" philosophy demanded exclusive focus on spinal adjustment. (21) Where D.D. positioned chiropractic within a family of vitalistic healing approaches, B.J. claimed categorical distinction based on unique understanding of and access to Innate Intelligence's expression through the nervous system.

D.D. presented Innate Intelligence as philosophical concept requiring reasoned development and articulation. B.J. claimed revelatory authority, positioning himself as facilitator for direct insight into Innate's nature and requirements. This epistemological shift—from philosophical reasoning to mystical revelation—enabled B.J. to resist critique and modification, establishing what Donahue termed "deification" of the Innate Intelligence concept. (9)

These divergences created the "straight-mixer" division that continues influencing professional identity debates. B.J.'s intensification of Innate's mystical-exclusive dimensions established the "straight" tradition resisting therapeutic diversification and scientific naturalization. This created what Coulter (25) identified as fundamental professional tension between philosophical preservation and scientific integration—a tension rooted in B.J.'s transformation of his father's concept from 1 philosophical element into singular defining essence.

The father-son divergence illustrates the concept's inherent instability: D.D.'s attempt to balance vitalistic philosophy with therapeutic pragmatism gave way to B.J.'s uncompromising elevation of philosophical principle over professional accommodation. This established the pattern of preservation-versus-translation that subsequent authors navigated with varying strategies and outcomes.

Reginald Gold (22)(1984): Vitalistic Traditionalism and Philosophical Purism

Definition and Vitalistic Commitment: Reginald Gold represents vigorous defense of traditional vitalistic philosophy against increasing scientism within chiropractic. He defined Innate Intelligence as "the law of life and organization that exists within all living things"

while explicitly maintaining its vitalistic character. (22) Gold insisted that Innate Intelligence represents genuine organizing intelligence rather than merely mechanistic processes, writing: "To reduce Innate Intelligence to biochemistry is to miss entirely the vitalistic principle that distinguishes life from non-life."

Gold's formulation retained Palmer's emphasis on Innate Intelligence as wisdom inherent in the organism, superior to conscious intellect or medical intervention. He characterized Innate Intelligence as possessing complete knowledge of the body's needs and perfect capability to coordinate function when interference is removed. Unlike some contemporary authors who naturalized the concept, Gold maintained explicit vitalism, arguing that life cannot be fully explained through physics and chemistry alone.

Clinical Application and Philosophical Purism: Gold emphasized that chiropractic's unique contribution lies in removing interference with Innate Intelligence rather than treating diseases or symptoms. He wrote: "The chiropractor's role is not to heal but to reconnect - to remove subluxation and thereby restore the innate intelligence's control over the body". This positioned chiropractic as fundamentally different from medicine in both philosophy and practice.

Gold strongly advocated for "straight" philosophy of chiropractic, arguing against expansion into symptom treatment or therapeutic modalities beyond adjustment. He saw Innate Intelligence as chiropractic's distinctive philosophical foundation that justified limiting scope to subluxation correction. This philosophical purism made Innate Intelligence the boundary marker distinguishing authentic chiropractic from "mixer" practices that he viewed as philosophical compromises.

Epistemological Approach: Gold's epistemology combined deductive reasoning from vitalistic principles with clinical observation. He argued that Innate Intelligence's existence could be inferred from life's organized complexity and the body's self-healing capacity. Unlike Palmer's mystical apprehension or modern scientific demands for mechanism, Gold offered rationalist defense of vitalism as necessary explanation for biological organization.

Convergences and Divergences: Gold converged strongly with both D.D. and B.J. Palmer in maintaining vitalistic metaphysics, affirming Innate Intelligence as genuine organizing wisdom, and limiting chiropractic scope to subluxation correction. He diverged from modernizing trends represented by Strauss and later

authors, explicitly rejecting attempts to naturalize or scientize the concept. Gold represents conscious preservation of traditional vitalism despite, or perhaps because of, increasing scientific critique. His work demonstrates that Palmer's original vision remained viable and advocated into the late 20th century, creating important counterpoint to secularization trajectory.

Joseph B. Strauss (23)(1991): Modern Orthodox Interpretation

Strauss represents modern "orthodox" philosophy of chiropractic's attempt to maintain Innate Intelligence while reducing metaphysical commitments. He defines Innate Intelligence as "the organizing quality that is inherent in living organisms". This definition retains "intelligence" language but emphasizes organizational quality over personal agency, reflecting movement toward naturalistic interpretation compatible with scientific discourse.

Strauss characterizes Innate Intelligence through its functions: "Innate coordinates the activities of the body for adaptation to the internal and external environment". This functional emphasis continues Stephenson's approach but further reduces vitalistic language. Notably, Strauss avoids calling Innate Intelligence "perfect" or "all-knowing," instead emphasizing its adaptive capacity within natural limitations. This represents significant conceptual shift from Palmer's infallible divine intelligence.

Regarding Universal Intelligence, Strauss maintains conceptual connection but reduces ontological commitment. He describes Innate Intelligence as "the expression of Universal Intelligence through matter" but emphasizes this represents organizing principles rather than spiritual substance. This interpretation makes Innate Intelligence compatible with systems biology while preserving traditional terminology - what might be called "Innate Intelligence without metaphysics."

Strauss made a clear demarcation between metaphysical and spiritual interpretations of Innate Intelligence. He positioned Innate as a metaphysical organizing principle immanent within biological systems—a non-material coordinating intelligence—while explicitly distancing this from spiritual or supernatural interpretations requiring external divine sources. For Strauss, Innate Intelligence represented vitalistic metaphysics (life possessing organizing principles beyond physical-chemical explanation) without necessitating spiritualism (divine external origin). This enabled maintaining philosophical

distinctiveness while avoiding religious connotations that complicated professional acceptance. (24)

Previous authors, particularly D.D. Palmer¹ and B.J. Palmer (20,21) had more explicitly integrated spiritual-supernatural dimensions, positioning Innate as "personified portion of Universal Intelligence" with divine origins. Strauss's metaphysical-but-not-spiritual framework represented strategic philosophical refinement, preserving vitalistic commitments while removing theological implications that generated professional controversy.

Clinically, Strauss retains subluxation theory but reframes it naturalistically: "Subluxation interferes with the body's innate ability to coordinate function". This formulation maintains chiropractic's distinctive therapeutic rationale without requiring belief in spiritual intelligence. Strauss converges with earlier authors in affirming Innate Intelligence's centrality to chiropractic identity and clinical practice. However, he diverges fundamentally through naturalistic reinterpretation such that he transforms Innate from spiritual reality to biological organizing principle.

Ian D. Coulter (25)(1999): Academic Scholarly Analysis

Coulter approaches Innate Intelligence from academic historical-philosophical perspective, analyzing it as cultural artifact rather than metaphysical reality. He describes Innate Intelligence as "chiropractic's distinctive vitalistic concept" (25) while examining its social functions and epistemological problems rather than defending its truth. This scholarly distance represents radical departure from authors who either affirm or reinterpret the concept.

Coulter identifies Innate Intelligence's role in professional identity formation: "The concept of Innate Intelligence has served to distinguish chiropractors from medical doctors, providing philosophical justification for chiropractic's distinctive therapeutic approach". This sociological analysis treats Innate Intelligence as professional boundary marker rather than description of biological reality. He examines how the concept functioned historically to justify broad scope of practice and resist medical subordination.

Coulter's critical analysis highlights epistemological problems: "Innate Intelligence as formulated by Palmer and Stephenson makes claims about unobservable entities and processes that cannot be empirically verified or falsified, creating difficulties for chiropractic's integration into evidence-based

healthcare." This identifies the concept's tension with contemporary scientific standards without dismissing its historical and professional significance.

Coulter represents radical departure from earlier authors through meta-level analysis that treats Innate Intelligence as explanatory target rather than explanatory resource. He converges with earlier authors only in recognizing the concept's centrality to chiropractic identity. He diverges fundamentally through scholarly distance and critical examination of the concept's functions, limitations, and professional consequences rather than affirming, systematizing, or reinterpreting it.

Joseph C. Keating Jr.(26)(2005): Critical Historical Scholarship

Keating's work represents a critical historical approach examining philosophy of chiropractic from a skeptical academic perspective. While Keating maintained a documented critical stance toward Palmer family's metaphysical commitments, (27) his perspective provided valuable meta-level analysis treating Innate Intelligence as object of historical investigation rather than professional commitment. His work scrutinized epistemological problems—distinguishing testable empirical claims from metaphysical assertions, identifying categorical confusions between types of knowledge claims—while maintaining analytical distance from advocating for or against the concept's validity (23,25)

This critical-analytic stance, rather than representing neutral objectivity, offered perspective distinct from advocates developing or defending Innate Intelligence interpretations. Keating's question "What do you mean by Innate?" (28) illuminated conceptual ambiguity and diversity rather than proposing resolution, providing historical documentation of philosophical tensions without presuming their resolution was necessary or possible.

Keating's analysis emphasized Innate Intelligence's contested status and internal inconsistencies. He noted: "The concept has been interpreted variously as divine wisdom (D.D. Palmer), organizing law (Stephenson), biological wisdom (Strauss), and systems property (modern interpreters), raising questions about whether these represent refinements of a single concept or successive replacements by fundamentally different ideas sharing only terminology." This observation highlights the interpretive diversity that creates communication problems within the profession.

Historical Context and Professional Function: Keating situated Innate Intelligence within chiropractic's historical development, examining how it served multiple professional functions. First, it provided metaphysical foundation distinguishing chiropractic from medicine: "By locating healing power in the patient's innate intelligence rather than in physician intervention, chiropractic created distinctive professional identity." Second, it justified broad scope of practice: "If subluxation interfered with innate intelligence's coordination of all bodily functions, then chiropractors could legitimately address any health condition". Third, Innate Intelligence served boundary maintenance against medical subordination. Keating wrote: "The concept's vitalistic metaphysics created unbridgeable philosophical gulf between chiropractic and scientific medicine, precluding integration but ensuring professional autonomy". This analysis reveals how philosophical commitments have professional consequences beyond mere theoretical interest.

Epistemological Critique: Keating subjected Innate Intelligence to epistemological scrutiny, identifying fundamental problems with knowledge claims. He argued: "Palmer's mystical epistemology, Stephenson's deductive rationalism, and modern empirical demands create incompatible standards for validating claims about Innate Intelligence. The profession has never resolved which epistemological approach should govern". This observation illuminates why debates about the concept prove so intractable.

Furthermore, Keating identified the concept's empirical elusiveness: "Innate Intelligence as formulated in classical philosophy of chiropractic refers to unobservable entity whose existence and properties cannot be directly verified. This creates difficulty for evidence-based practice that demands empirical validation". Unlike authors who dismiss vitalism or attempt naturalistic reinterpretation, Keating analyzed the epistemological problems without prejudging metaphysical questions.

Scholarly Distance and Professional Implications: Unlike all previous authors, Keating maintained scholarly distance, neither affirming nor denying Innate Intelligence but analyzing its historical functions, internal tensions, and professional consequences. He wrote: "As historian, my task is not to determine whether Innate Intelligence exists but to examine how this concept has shaped chiropractic's development, internal conflicts, and relationship to mainstream healthcare".

This methodological stance enabled Keating to identify patterns invisible to committed advocates or opponents. He noted how the concept created split between "straights" and "mixers," shaped educational curricula, influenced research agendas, and affected integration efforts. His analysis revealed that philosophical commitments about Innate Intelligence correlate with positions on scope of practice, relationship to medicine, and evidence standards.

Convergences and Divergences: Keating converged with Coulter in treating Innate Intelligence as object of scholarly analysis rather than professional commitment. However, where Coulter emphasized sociological functions, Keating provided an historical narrative and epistemological critique. He diverged radically from all other authors by refusing to take position on the concept's validity, instead examining why chiropractors have taken different positions and what consequences follow. His work represents meta-level analysis that illuminates why first-order debates about Innate Intelligence prove so persistent and divisive. For contemporary chiropractic, Keating's analysis aimed to provide historical and philosophical context for informed discussion about the concept's place in modern practice and education.

David Koch (28)(2008): Integrative Synthesis and Contemporary Application

Definition and Integrative Approach: David Koch represents contemporary attempt to synthesize traditional philosophy of chiropractic with modern biological science, offering integrative interpretation that maintains clinical relevance while reducing metaphysical controversy. He defines Innate Intelligence as "the inherent self-organizing and self-regulating capacity of living systems" (28), a formulation that bridges vitalistic tradition and contemporary systems biology.

Koch's approach explicitly aims to preserve what he considers Innate Intelligence's valid insights - the body's remarkable self-organizing and self-healing capacities - while translating them into language compatible with modern science. He writes: "The concept of Innate Intelligence, properly understood, expresses profound truth about biological organization that contemporary complexity science and systems theory can elucidate without requiring supernatural commitments".

Key Characteristics and Systems Biology: Koch characterizes Innate Intelligence through concepts from systems biology, complexity theory, and cybernetics.

He identifies several key features: self-organization (spontaneous pattern formation), self-regulation (homeostatic mechanisms), adaptation (environmental responsiveness), and emergence (higher-order properties arising from component interactions). These characteristics, Koch argues, capture what Palmer and Stephenson intuited about living organization without requiring vitalistic metaphysics.

Koch deliberately retains traditional terminology while reinterpreting its meaning. He argues: "The term 'Innate Intelligence' should be preserved because it captures the purposive, coordinated character of biological organization in ways that purely mechanistic language obscures. However, we must understand this intelligence as emergent property of complex systems rather than separate directing entity".

Relationship to Universal Intelligence: Koch offers innovative reinterpretation of the Universal Intelligence-Innate Intelligence relationship through hierarchy theory. Universal Intelligence represents universal laws and principles (physics, chemistry, thermodynamics) that govern all matter. Innate Intelligence represents how living systems, through evolution and development, harness universal principles to create and maintain biological organization. This preserves conceptual relationship while eliminating supernatural ontology.

Koch's work clearly favors systems biology naturalism over vitalistic metaphysics. While retaining "Innate Intelligence" terminology, Koch reinterpreted the concept as metaphorical representation of complex adaptive systems, emergent properties, and self-organizing biological processes rather than as irreducible non-material principle. (28)

He argued that contemporary systems biology, complexity theory, and organizational neuroscience provide adequate explanatory frameworks for phenomena Palmer attributed to Innate Intelligence—coordination, adaptation, self-healing—without requiring vitalistic metaphysics. This represented strategic preservation of philosophical language while replacing metaphysical content with naturalistic scientific explanation. Koch's framework enabled maintaining professional distinctiveness through retained vocabulary while achieving epistemological compatibility with scientific healthcare through naturalized interpretation.

Clinical Significance and Application: Koch connects his interpretation directly to clinical practice, arguing that understanding Innate Intelligence as self-organizing

capacity has practical implications. Subluxation interferes with normal self-organization by disrupting information flow (neural communication). Adjustment facilitates restoration of self-organizing capacity by removing interference. He writes: "The chiropractor works with the patient's own self-healing capacity - their 'innate intelligence' - rather than imposing external healing. This remains true whether we interpret this capacity vitalistically or as emergent property."

This formulation allows Koch to maintain clinical continuity with tradition while adopting contemporary biological framework. He argues that chiropractic's emphasis on facilitating self-healing aligns with growing medical interest in salutogenesis, self-organization, and complexity in health and disease.

Epistemological Synthesis: Koch's epistemology combines empirical validation with phenomenological appreciation. He argues that while mechanistic details can be studied scientifically, the lived experience of self-organization - the subjective sense of bodily wisdom - provides complementary understanding. This dual epistemology attempts to honor both scientific and experiential ways of knowing.

Convergences and Divergences: Koch converges with Palmer and traditional authors in affirming the body's inherent organizational wisdom and chiropractic's role in facilitating its expression. He converges with Stephenson in systematic approach and with modern authors in seeking scientific legitimacy. However, he diverges from Palmer through naturalistic reinterpretation, from Stephenson through modern scientific framework, from Gold through rejection of vitalistic metaphysics, and from Keating/Coulter through commitment to the concept rather than scholarly distance. Koch represents contemporary systems-theoretical contemporary synthesis attempting to preserve traditional insights within modern scientific worldview - a middle path between vitalistic preservation and critical dismissal.

Simon A. Senzon (29)(2011): Contemporary Evolutionary Naturalism

Senzon's work receives extended treatment here due to: (1) Representing the most recent major philosophical development in Innate Intelligence interpretation, (2) Explicitly engaging with all previous interpretive traditions while proposing synthesis, and (3) Addressing contemporary professional debates about philosophical foundations with direct relevance to ongoing legitimacy discussions. His developmental framework attempts

comprehensive integration of the historical trajectories analyzed here.

Definition and Sophisticated Historical Analysis: Senzon employs developmental systems theory, complexity science, and Integral Theory to argue that Palmer's conceptualization of Innate Intelligence was more philosophically sophisticated than subsequent interpreters recognized. Rather than 'reducing' the concept through naturalization, Senzon contends that contemporary systems biology and emergence theory finally provide frameworks adequate to Palmer's actual insights about self-organizing, developmental intelligence in living systems.

Senzon proposes that "Innate Intelligence can be understood as the self-organizing capacity of living systems" (29), explicitly connecting traditional chiropractic concepts to modern biology. However, his central historiographical claim goes deeper: he argues that Palmer was operating at what he terms a "postmodern" and "postrational" level that subsequent systematizers failed to recognize.

Emergent Property and Developmental Understanding: Senzon characterizes Innate Intelligence as emergent property: "Rather than a separate entity directing the body, Innate Intelligence emerges from the complex interactions of bodily systems". Drawing on complexity theory and systems biology, Senzon argues that this emergent understanding may actually be more faithful to Palmer's developmental and evolutionary insights than the substance-dualist interpretations that dominated subsequent philosophy of chiropractic.

He contends that Palmer's recognition of self-organizing, adaptive intelligence in living systems anticipated contemporary understandings of emergence, though Palmer necessarily expressed these insights through the metaphysical language available in 19th-century American culture. Senzon writes: "Contemporary biology recognizes that living systems exhibit purposive behavior without requiring conscious direction - this is precisely what chiropractic philosophers meant by Innate Intelligence".

Clinical Application and Functional Continuity: This reinterpretation maintains Innate Intelligence's organizational role while transforming metaphysical commitments. Senzon argues that Palmer's insights about the body's self-regulating capacity remain valid when understood through contemporary biological frameworks. Subluxation interferes with normal self-organization, and adjustment facilitates restoration

of adaptive capacity - but these processes operate through natural mechanisms of systems biology rather than supernatural intelligence.

Epistemological Framework: Unlike Palmer's mystical-experiential epistemology, Senzon employs rigorous historical-philosophical analysis informed by Integral Theory. This methodological approach, rather than creating distance from Palmer, paradoxically enabled Senzon to recognize aspects of Palmer's sophistication that vitalistic preservationists or systematic codifiers may have overlooked.

Senzon's Convergences with Palmer's Original Vision:

Senzon's interpretation demonstrates several forms of alignment with Palmer's foundational insights that other authors may have obscured:

1. **Developmental Sophistication:** By emphasizing emergence and developmental systems theory, Senzon recognizes Palmer's understanding of intelligence as processual and developmental rather than static—an insight that Stephenson's systematization and Strauss's codification may have obscured through logical rigidity.
2. **Organizational Primacy:** Like Palmer, Senzon affirms that organizational intelligence is inherent to living systems themselves, not imposed externally—this distinguishes his naturalism from mechanistic reductionism.
3. **Evolutionary Context:** Senzon's integration of evolutionary developmental biology resonates with Palmer's own engagement with evolutionary thought, suggesting Palmer's insights were more aligned with dynamic, evolutionary processes than with static vitalistic substances.
4. **Clinical Continuity:** Both Palmer and Senzon position chiropractic as facilitating the organism's own self-organizing, adaptive capacities rather than imposing external healing.
5. **Systems Thinking:** Senzon's emphasis on whole-systems integration and complexity mirrors Palmer's recognition that Innate Intelligence coordinated all bodily functions as integrated totality.

Senzon's Divergences from Palmer's Expression:

1. **Epistemological Framework:** Where Palmer employed mystical-experiential epistemology

characteristic of 19th-century spiritualism, Senzon uses contemporary scientific frameworks (systems biology, complexity theory, Integral Theory) to articulate similar insights about organismic intelligence.

2. **Metaphysical Language:** Senzon eliminates Palmer's substance-dualist language (soul, spirit, separate intelligence) in favor of emergence and complexity concepts. However, Senzon might argue this represents translation of Palmer's insights into contemporary categories rather than abandonment of his core recognitions.
3. **Scholarly Method:** Unlike Palmer's visionary-experiential approach, Senzon employs rigorous historical-philosophical analysis. This methodological distance paradoxically enabled him to recognize aspects of Palmer's sophistication that more committed advocates (Gold) or systematic codifiers (Stephenson) may have missed.
4. **Supernatural Elements:** Senzon eliminates references to divine or spiritual intelligence, repositioning Palmer's insights within naturalistic biological frameworks.

The Interpretive Challenge:

Senzon's work (29) raises a crucial historiographical question: Did Palmer's core insights concern substance-dualist metaphysics (soul/spirit as separate entity), or did they concern the self-organizing, developmental, adaptive intelligence manifest in living systems? If the latter, then Senzon's naturalistic reinterpretation might represent the most accurate contemporary understanding of Palmer's fundamental recognitions, freed from 19th-century metaphysical packaging. If the former, then Senzon has indeed transformed Palmer's vision despite maintaining functional continuity.

This question cannot be resolved through historical evidence alone, as it requires philosophical judgment about which aspects of Palmer's formulation constitute essential insight versus cultural expression. However, Senzon's sophisticated historical-philosophical analysis, informed by Integral Theory's recognition of developmental and evolutionary dimensions, provides frameworks for recognizing Palmer's insights as potentially more 'postmodern' and developmentally sophisticated than traditional vitalistic readings acknowledged.

Significance: Amongst those authors included in this analysis Senzon's interpretation represents the most sophisticated contemporary attempt to recognize Palmer's potential developmental sophistication while translating it into scientifically credible language. His work challenges simple narratives of either vitalistic preservation or naturalistic abandonment, suggesting instead that understanding Palmer's actual insights may require contemporary frameworks that Palmer himself did not possess—a methodological principle consistent with all serious historiography.

Comparative Overview

Tables 2-5 systematically present the comparative analysis findings across all 9 authors:

Table 2: Author Overview and Primary Works

Author	Year	Primary Work	Approach	Publication
D.D. Palmer (1)	1910	Science, Art & Philosophy	Foundational Spiritual	Portland: Portland Printing
Stephenson (2)	1927	Chiropractic Textbook	Systematic Codification	Davenport: Palmer School
B.J. Palmer (21)	1949	Subluxation Specific	Mystical Development	Davenport: Palmer School
Gold (22)	1984	Triune of Life	Vitalistic Traditionalism	Self-published
Strauss (23)	1991	Refined by Fire	Modern Orthodox	Levittown: FACE
Coulter (25)	1999	Chiropractic: A Philosophy	Academic Historical	Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann
Keating (26)	2005	Philosophy in Chiropractic	Critical Scholarship	McGraw-Hill
Koch (28)	2008	Chiropractic: The Superior Alternative	Integrative Synthesis	Colorado: Koch Publishing
Senzon (29)	2011	Chiropractic & Energy Medicine	Developmental Recovery via Contemporary Frameworks	J. Chiropr Humanities

Table 3: Core Conceptualizations of Innate Intelligence

Author	Core Definition	Key Characteristics	Relation to UI
D.D. Palmer (1)	Soul, Spirit, Spark of Life	Spiritual, personal agency, perfect, via nerves	Individualized segment
Stephenson (2)	Inborn intelligence (Prin. 20)	Law-like, always normal, adapts forces	Limited jurisdiction segment
B.J. Palmer (21)	"Personified portion of Universal Intelligence"; supreme organizing force coordinating	Mystical-spiritual intensification; mental impulse as coordinating mechanism; four components of subluxation (mental impulse interference)	Portion individualized

	through mental impulse transmission	critical); "above-down, inside-out" philosophy; technological measurement (EENM); chiropractor as facilitator not healer	
Gold (22)	Law of life and organization	Vitalistic, organizing wisdom, anti-reductionist	Vital principle expression
Strauss (23)	Organizing quality in organisms	Functional, reduced metaphysics, adaptive	Expression through matter
Coulter (25)	Professional boundary marker	Sociological function, identity formation	Examined not affirmed
Keating (27)	Contested historical concept	Multiple interpretations, professional functions	Critical analysis object
Koch (28)	Self-organizing capacity	Emergent, systems property, purposive	Universal laws via evolution
Senzon (29)	Self-organizing capacity articulated via contemporary frameworks	Argues Palmer was postmodern/ postrational; developmental sophistication recognized through Integral Theory	Contemporary biology articulates what Palmer recognized

Table 4: *Evolutionary Trends and Interpretive Trajectories*

Trajectory/Trend	Representative Authors	Description	Impact on Palmer's Vision
Vitalistic Preservation	B.J. Palmer, Gold	Maintaining spiritual/ vitalistic metaphysics	Strongest continuity with original
Systematic Codification	Stephenson, Strauss	Logical organization via principles	Loss of mystical immediacy; imposed rigidity
Secularization	Stephenson → Strauss	Progressive removal of spiritual language	Elimination of soul/spirit identity
Integrative Synthesis	Koch	Traditional insights + modern science	Bridging vitalism and naturalism
Developmental Recovery	Senzon	Contemporary frameworks articulate Palmer's developmental sophistication	Potential recovery of insights systematizers obscured
Critical Perspective	Coulter, Keating	Historical-philosophical analysis	Meta-level examination vs. affirmation
Clinical Refinement	All except Coulter, Keating	Focus on nerve interference/ adjustment	Consistent therapeutic rationale
Epistemological Shift	Palmer → Stephenson → Keating → Senzon	Intuition → Logic → Critical analysis → Analytical frameworks	Multiple epistemological transformations

Table 5: *Lost and Gained Elements in Evolution*

Dimension	Lost from Palmer's Vision	Gained in Evolution	Senzon's Recovery Argument

Spiritual	Divine soul, spiritual substance, God-connection	Religious neutrality, scientific compatibility	19th-century packaging vs. developmental insights
Intellectual	Intuitive knowing, mystical insight	Logical systematization, empirical validation, critical analysis	Frameworks to recognize Palmer's sophistication
Clinical	Spiritual healing, divine intervention	Scientific mechanism, reproducibility, evidence	Self-organizing capacity maintained
Professional	Prophetic calling, spiritual mission	Healthcare profession, academic discipline	Facilitating organismic wisdom preserved
Epistemological	Direct apprehension, mystical certainty	Critical scholarship, empirical testing, analytical frameworks	Contemporary tools enable recognition

DISCUSSION

This comparative analysis of 9 influential authors reveals another example of what we have previously³ termed "The Palmer Paradox" - each author attempts to preserve D.D. Palmer's key constructs, as part of chiropractic's distinctive philosophical concept, while adapting it to evolving scientific and cultural contexts and in doing so produce formulations that differ fundamentally from Palmer's original vision. The evolution demonstrates not simple clarification but systematic transformation across multiple trajectories, raising crucial questions about conceptual continuity, professional identity, and epistemological diversity. We previously (3) documented a similar systematic transformation in relation to Universal Intelligence.

Three Distinct Trajectories

The analysis reveals 3 distinct interpretive trajectories, each representing coherent response to tensions between tradition and modernity. First, vitalistic preservation (B.J. Palmer, Gold) maintains explicitly spiritual or vitalistic metaphysics despite scientific critique. These authors affirm Innate Intelligence as genuine organizing wisdom transcending mechanistic explanation, accepting professional marginalization as price of philosophical integrity. Gold particularly exemplifies this stance, explicitly rejecting scientific naturalization as betrayal of chiropractic's core insights.

Second, systematic codification (Stephenson, Strauss) attempts to preserve the concept while reducing metaphysical controversy through logical organization and functional emphasis. Stephenson's 33 principles

transformed Palmer's mysticism into systematic framework accessible through reason rather than requiring spiritual initiation. Strauss continued this trajectory, further naturalizing language while maintaining conceptual structure. This approach seeks middle ground between vitalistic commitment and scientific legitimacy.

Third, academic translation represents diverse approaches: Coulter and Keating adopt scholarly distance, treating Innate Intelligence as object of investigation rather than professional commitment. Koch attempts integrative synthesis attempting to bridge traditional concepts and modern science through systems biology and complexity theory. Senzon pursues what might be termed 'developmental recovery through contemporary frameworks,' employing sophisticated historical-philosophical analysis to argue that Palmer's insights about self-organizing intelligence were more philosophically sophisticated than subsequent interpreters recognized. This trajectory subdivides significantly, with Senzon's approach differing fundamentally from both critical scholars (Coulter/Keating) who maintain analytical distance and integrative synthesizers (Koch) who seek primarily to modernize traditional concepts.

The Gold Preservation: Vitalism Against the Tide

Gold's vigorous defense of traditional vitalism into the late 20th Century demonstrates that Palmer's original vision remained viable and advocated despite dominant secularization trends. His work provides crucial counterpoint to narratives that present evolution toward naturalism as inevitable or universally accepted. Instead, Gold's position represents vitalistic interpretation maintained as principled position rather than merely residual traditionalism.

Gold's philosophical purism - his insistence that chiropractic maintain vitalistic commitments and limit scope to subluxation correction - illuminates important trade-offs. Vitalistic preservation maintains philosophical distinctiveness and internal coherence but at the risk of professional marginalization and limited integration with mainstream healthcare. Naturalization might achieve broader legitimacy but risks losing distinctive insights and professional identity. Gold chose distinctiveness over integration, a choice that continues to resonate amongst proponents of "straight" philosophy of chiropractic.

The Keating Contribution: Critical Perspective as Distinct Mode

Keating's critical historical contribution provides a perspective, representing neither vitalistic affirmation nor naturalistic reinterpretation but meta-level analysis examining why chiropractors have conceptualized Innate Intelligence differently and the professional consequences that followed. His work reveals that debates about the concept reflect deeper disagreements about chiropractic's nature, purpose, and relationship to science and medicine.

Keating's epistemological critique identified fundamental issues: Palmer's mystical epistemology, Stephenson's deductive rationalism, modern empirical demands, and Keating's own historical-critical approach represent incompatible standards for validating claims about Innate Intelligence. The profession has never resolved which epistemological framework should govern, creating intractable debates where participants literally speak past each other due to incommensurable standards.

Moreover, Keating illuminated how philosophical commitments related to Innate Intelligence correlate with positions on scope of practice, relationship to medicine, and evidence standards. Those affirming vitalistic Innate Intelligence (Gold) tended toward limited scope focused on subluxation correction and resistance to medical integration. Those naturalizing the concept (Koch, Senzon) tended toward broader scope and an openness to scientific collaboration. These correlations suggest that Innate Intelligence debates involve much more than abstract metaphysics - they implicate scope of practice and fundamental questions related to professional identity.

The Koch Synthesis: Middle Path Possibility?

Koch's contribution represents a sophisticated contemporary attempt to navigate between vitalistic preservation and scientific naturalism. His integration of traditional insights with systems biology, complexity theory, and emergence concepts offered a potential middle path forward preserving clinical continuity while achieving scientific credibility. Koch's approach suggested that apparent dichotomy between affirming and rejecting Innate Intelligence may be false - perhaps the concept could be naturalized while preserving functional truth.

However, Koch's synthesis faces challenges from multiple directions. Vitalistic preservationists (Gold) reject naturalization as a fundamental betrayal, arguing that reducing Innate Intelligence to emergent property eliminates what made it distinctive and valuable. Critical

scholars (Keating) question whether naturalized version maintains sufficient continuity with tradition to warrant retaining terminology – perhaps new concepts would prove more honest. Fully committed naturalists might question whether "intelligence" language obscures more than it illuminates when applied to unconscious biological processes.

Despite these challenges, Koch's integrative approach deserves serious consideration as a potential resolution to chiropractic's philosophical tensions. His work demonstrates that sophisticated engagement with both traditional philosophy, modern philosophy, and science can produce formulations that honor multiple legitimate concerns. Whether his synthesis succeeds in satisfying diverse factions remains to be determined through ongoing professional dialogue.

The Senzon Challenge: Developmental Sophistication and Historiographical Method

Senzon's interpretation presents a unique historiographical challenge that requires careful analysis. Unlike authors who either preserved vitalistic language while simplifying content (Gold) or eliminated both language and metaphysics (Keating/Coulter), Senzon makes a claim about Palmer's original sophistication that other interpreters failed to recognize.

Specifically, Senzon argues—drawing on Integral Theory and developmental frameworks—that Palmer's understanding was 'postmodern' and 'postrational,' operating at levels of complexity that subsequent systematizers (Stephenson) actually reduced through their logical codification. If Senzon is correct, then what appears as 'evolution' toward naturalism might actually represent recovery of Palmer's developmental insights from the systematization and rigidification imposed by early codifiers.

This interpretation would suggest that:

1. Palmer's use of 19th-century metaphysical language (soul, spirit, divine intelligence) represented cultural packaging of insights about self-organizing, developmental, adaptive intelligence in living systems—insights that contemporary systems biology and complexity theory can finally articulate adequately.
2. Stephenson's systematization, while educationally valuable, may have imposed logical rigidity on Palmer's more fluid,

developmental understanding.

3. Vitalistic preservation (Gold) may have preserved metaphysical language while missing Palmer's deeper developmental insights.
4. Senzon's naturalistic interpretation might represent not elimination of Palmer's insights but their most accurate contemporary articulation.

Our earlier analysis of Universal Intelligence (3) may have underappreciated Senzon's contribution by treating his use of contemporary frameworks as 'distancing' rather than recognizing it as the methodological approach that enabled his recognition of Palmer's sophistication. The same risk exists in analyzing Innate Intelligence.

The Critical Question

Was Palmer fundamentally a substance-dualist (soul as separate entity) whose core metaphysical commitments require vitalistic preservation (Gold), or was he a developmental theorist whose insights about self-organizing adaptive intelligence were expressed through available 19th-century metaphysical language but can now be more accurately articulated through contemporary biology?

This question cannot be definitively resolved; however, it should be further explored rather than implicitly decided based on language that assumes either vitalistic preservation or naturalistic reduction. Senzon's work, informed by Integral Theory's developmental frameworks, provides the most sophisticated contemporary attempt to recognize Palmer's potential developmental sophistication while translating it into scientifically credible language.

Implications

If Senzon's interpretation has merit, then the 'Palmer Paradox' might be reframed: The paradox would lie not in naturalists abandoning Palmer's insights but in vitalistic preservationists maintaining Palmer's metaphysical language while missing his developmental insights, and in systematic codifiers imposing logical rigidity on Palmer's more dynamic understanding. This alternative reading does not invalidate the Palmer Paradox but complicates it, suggesting that multiple forms of transformation occurred—some involving loss of insight, others involving recovery.

Whether Senzon's historiographical claim is ultimately persuasive requires engagement with the substantive

question: Can Palmer's insights about Innate Intelligence be adequately captured through contemporary systems biology and emergence theory, or does this naturalization inevitably lose something essential?

This question deserves serious philosophical attention rather than dismissal through either uncritical vitalistic preservation or unreflective naturalistic reduction.

Semantic Flexibility and Conceptual Drift

Innate Intelligence demonstrates remarkable semantic flexibility – capacity to sustain interpretations from Palmer's spiritual soul through Stephenson's organizational law to Senzon's emergent property while maintaining terminological consistency. This flexibility has enabled the concept's persistence across contexts that would seemingly require its abandonment. A concept compatible with both Palmer's spiritualism and Senzon's naturalism possesses impressive adaptability.

However, semantic flexibility produces conceptual drift creating communication problems within the profession. When "Innate Intelligence" can mean spiritual soul (Palmer), organizational law (Stephenson), vitalistic principle (Gold), professional boundary marker (Coulter), critical examination object (Keating), integrated capacity (Koch), or developmental property requiring contemporary frameworks to articulate (Senzon), the term's stability masks profound conceptual instability. Philosophers distinguish between terminological continuity and conceptual continuity; Innate Intelligence exemplifies how the former can persist despite disruption of the latter.

Epistemological Transformations

The evolution reveals fundamental epistemological transformation from experiential knowing, and reference to other authors, through systematic reasoning to critical scholarship and contemporary analytical frameworks. Palmer claimed knowledge of Innate Intelligence through mystical insight – "flash of light" revelation and reference to other authors (Davis) rather than logical deduction. Stephenson's systematization transformed this epistemology, suggesting Innate Intelligence could be comprehended through rational analysis. Keating represents further transformation to critical historical-philosophical analysis. Koch and Senzon represent contemporary analytical approaches: Koch through integrative synthesis and Senzon through sophisticated historical-philosophical analysis informed by developmental theory, both proposing the concept be examined through contemporary biological frameworks, though

with different emphases—Koch seeking integration of traditional and modern concepts, Senzon arguing for recognition of Palmer's developmental sophistication through contemporary frameworks.

This epistemological diversity creates fundamental challenges for professional consensus. Participants in debates about Innate Intelligence often operate from incommensurable epistemological frameworks, making resolution impossible without first achieving meta-level agreement about appropriate standards for knowledge claims. Keating's analysis proves valuable here, revealing that first-order debates about the concept mask deeper epistemological disagreements requiring explicit attention.

Clinical Implications and Therapeutic Rationale

Despite philosophical divergence, all authors except Coulter and Keating, neither of whom were/are chiropractors, maintain Innate Intelligence's clinical centrality. The concept provides the dominant clinical rationale for many practicing chiropractors: subluxation interferes with the expression of Innate Intelligence, adjustment removes interference, health is restored through the body's inherent wisdom. This clinical rationale persists for many practicing chiropractors despite varying metaphysical interpretations, suggesting functional importance transcends philosophical disputes.

However, different understandings suggest different clinical approaches. Palmer's spiritual formulation positions chiropractors as facilitators of divine healing. Gold's vitalistic traditionalism emphasizes limited scope and philosophical purity. Koch's integrative synthesis implies supporting complex self-organization through informed intervention. These varying clinical implications remain minimally explored yet represent meaningfully different professional identities sharing common terminology.

Professional Identity and the Straight-Mixer Divide

The analysis illuminates how interpretations of Innate Intelligence correlate with positions in chiropractic's "straight-mixer" divide. Recent work by Richards (30) showed that 74.2% of respondents supported traditional vitalism understood as Innate Intelligence, 10-11% were neutral or held other views, and the remaining 15% opposed vitalism (including Innate Intelligence) and viewed it as an obsolete and unscientific doctrine.

Straight chiropractors (Gold) maintain vitalistic Innate

Intelligence, limit scope to subluxation correction, resist medical integration, and emphasize philosophical distinctiveness. Mixers embrace broader scope, medical collaboration, and often naturalize or minimize philosophical commitments. This correlation suggests that Innate Intelligence serves as proxy for deeper professional identity questions. As Villanueva-Russell observed in her sociological analysis, the profession finds itself "caught in the crosshairs" between competing claims to cultural authority—one rooted in traditional vitalistic philosophy, the other in biomedical legitimacy. (31) This tension has placed chiropractic in what Reggars characterized as being "at the crossroads," though he provocatively asked whether the profession is "just going around in circles" rather than making meaningful progress toward resolution. (32)

Thornhill has argued that this divide is fundamentally ideological rather than merely technical, noting that it mirrors "similar debates within academic philosophy regarding vitalism". (33) The cost of this division has been substantial. As Mootz observed, Palmer's early philosophy created "categorical errors by combining testable hypotheses regarding tone with religious language and metaphysical metaphors" (9) This conflation of the empirical and the metaphysical has made productive dialogue difficult, as chiropractors may discuss the same constructs while holding fundamentally incompatible interpretations. Simpson and Young recently examined this question directly, asking whether "vitalism in contemporary chiropractic" functions as "a help or a hindrance" to professional advancement. (34) Their analysis suggests that while vitalistic concepts may provide philosophical coherence for some practitioners, they simultaneously create barriers to integration with mainstream healthcare and scientific credibility.

The conceptual drift and variance among authors creates communication problems within the profession. When chiropractors discuss Innate Intelligence, they may believe they share understanding while actually holding incompatible views. Keating's work from 1997 (27) suggests that this divide reflects fundamental disagreement about chiropractic's nature: a healing tradition predicated on metaphysical commitments that sit outside the dominant healthcare paradigm (straight) versus an integrated 'limited scope – MSK, condition-specific and therapeutic modeling' healthcare profession conforming to the mainstream healthcare paradigm's metaphysical commitments (mixer).

However, Good identified a third, often overlooked

position: the centrist majority who sit between what he terms the "hypercritical evidentialistas" and the "uncritical observationalists". (36) This rational empiricist middle ground, Good argues, may represent the profession's actual mainstream—practitioners who acknowledge clinical realities while demanding rigorous inquiry. Similarly, McAulay (18) identifies the polarization between "authoritarians" who uncritically support established notions and "dismissivists" who reject traditional concepts without rigorous analysis. Both authors suggest that the future of the profession depends on this moderate majority becoming more vocal and proactive. Villanueva-Russell's analysis supports this view, noting that the profession's "cultural authority" remains contested precisely because these philosophical debates remain unresolved, leaving chiropractic vulnerable to both internal fragmentation and external skepticism. (31) Thornhill (33) later built upon this framework in examining vitalism's role in professional identity debates.

Innate Intelligence debates thus involve much more than abstract philosophy—they implicate scope of practice, educational curricula, research priorities, and integration strategies. Understanding this helps explain why philosophical debates prove so crucial, persistent, and emotionally charged. Mootz (9) emphasizes that distinguishing between chiropractic's art, science, and philosophy is essential if the profession is to "apply memories to the specific case" of research methodology while acknowledging that "testable hypotheses" must be separated from "religious language and metaphysical metaphors".

Keating³⁶ suggests that, when it comes to Innate Intelligence, there are at least 4 major meanings and several derivatives available to us. As a result, Keating concludes his commentary from 2002 by encouraging us to ask, 'What do you mean by Innate?'

Implications for Contemporary Chiropractic

Understanding Innate Intelligence's evolution across nine major authors illuminates contemporary debates about chiropractic identity. Conflicts over scope of practice, evidence requirements, and philosophical education reflect deeper tensions about which interpretation should guide the profession. Those affirming vitalistic vision (Gold) resist evidence-based medicine's constraints as incompatible with chiropractic's foundations. Those of a critical perspective (Keating) examine rather than resolve these tensions, providing historical and philosophical context.

Those embracing naturalistic interpretations (Koch, Senzon) welcome scientific integration as necessary modernization.

These tensions cannot be resolved through empirical research alone, as they reflect philosophical disagreements about chiropractic's nature and purpose. Should the profession maintain Palmer's spiritual heritage (Gold), complete the naturalization trajectory (Senzon), pursue integrative synthesis (Koch), or acknowledge irresolvable diversity requiring critical pluralism (Keating)? This question requires philosophical discernment rather than merely accumulating evidence.

The analysis suggests that meaningful engagement with philosophy of chiropractic requires acknowledging both historical continuity and substantive conceptual change. Uncritical traditionalism treating contemporary interpretations as identical to Palmer's formulation ignores real philosophical evolution. Dismissive presentism rejecting traditional concepts without understanding their original meaning and function proves equally inadequate. Keating's historical scholarship and Koch's integrative synthesis, recognize how concepts transform while tracing both continuities and discontinuities.

Several implications emerge for contemporary chiropractic. First, meaningful philosophical discourse requires recognizing semantic flexibility and acknowledging that shared terminology may mask fundamental conceptual disagreement. Second, the profession must address whether naturalistic reinterpretations preserve sufficient continuity with tradition to allow retaining traditional concepts or whether conceptual transformation has been so substantial that new vocabulary would prove more honest. Third, understanding historical evolution through a critical perspective (Keating) and integrative synthesis (Koch) can inform current decisions about professional direction by illuminating patterns, trade-offs, and consequences of different philosophical approaches.

Understanding this evolution illuminates contemporary debates within chiropractic about professional identity, scope of practice, and relationship to evidence-based healthcare. Conflicts between "straight" and "mixer" chiropractors, between those emphasizing subluxation correction and those practicing musculoskeletal medicine, between those maintaining vitalistic philosophy and those embracing biological naturalism—all partly reflect disagreement about which

interpretation of Innate Intelligence should guide the profession. These are not merely tactical disagreements about practice scope but philosophical disputes about chiropractic's essential nature.

This 9-author sample represents major interpretive trajectories but excludes historical-genealogical analysts (Donahue, Morgan, Jackson), external observers (Morinis, Kaptchuk), methodological critics (McAulay), and recent synthesizers (Sinnott). Our focus on conceptual developers rather than historians, critics, or external social scientists reflects the research question's emphasis on evolution of interpretations rather than debates about legitimacy or professional sociology. Future research might examine these alternative perspectives or practice-based interpretations not captured in published scholarly literature.

Future Analysis

Future research should examine how different conceptualizations of Innate Intelligence correlate with practice patterns, scope decisions, and attitudes toward evidence-based practice across larger practitioner samples. Specifically, empirical investigations like those carried out by Richards³⁰ of how contemporary chiropractors understand Innate Intelligence would reveal whether philosophical diversity manifests in different professional beliefs, practices and patient outcomes. Finally, comparative analysis with other healthcare professions' philosophical concepts could illuminate whether chiropractic's evolution and the Palmer Paradox represent unique trajectory or exemplify broader patterns in how healthcare professions negotiate tradition and modernity.

While Innate Intelligence's metaphysical status remains contested across vitalistic affirmation (Gold), systematic organization (Stephenson, Strauss), critical examination (Coulter, Keating), integrative synthesis (Koch), and developmental recovery through contemporary frameworks (Senzon), its historical and sociological significance proves undeniable. As chiropractic navigates its future within increasingly evidence-focused healthcare systems, understanding how this central concept has evolved across nine major interpreters—what has been preserved and what transformed, what tensions persist and what synthesis proves possible, and particularly whether contemporary frameworks enable recovery of Palmer's insights or represent their transformation—becomes essential for informed decision-making about professional identity

and direction.

CONCLUSION

Innate Intelligence has evolved from Palmer's explicitly spiritual concept—the soul or divine intelligence within each organism—through multiple trajectories: vitalistic preservation (B.J. Palmer, Gold), systematic codification (Stephenson, Strauss), critical scholarship (Coulter, Keating), and contemporary integration (Koch, Senzon). Each trajectory represents a distinct response to tensions between maintaining Palmer's original insights and adapting to contemporary evidence-based contexts.

This evolution exemplifies "The Palmer Paradox" whereby each author's attempt to preserve chiropractic's philosophical distinctiveness while adapting to scientific and cultural contexts has produced interpretations differing fundamentally from the tradition they claim to maintain. This paradox likely reflects broader tensions shared among other healthcare professions in their quest to maintain founding principles whilst simultaneously striving for contemporary legitimacy.

While Innate Intelligence's metaphysical status remains contested across vitalistic affirmation, systematic organization, critical examination, and integrative synthesis, its historical and sociological significance proves undeniable. As chiropractic navigates its path toward its possible futures within what is an increasingly evidence-focused healthcare system, understanding how this central concept has evolved and is evolving becomes essential for informed decision-making about professional identity and direction.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors acknowledge the College of Advanced Healthcare Science (CAHS)* for institutional support and the chiropractic educators whose past work and ongoing discussions helped inform this analysis. Special acknowledgment to the legacy of D.D. Palmer whose paradigm-shifting insights continue to illuminate the philosophy of chiropractic.

* CAHS (www.cahsedu.com) is a 'University Center' affiliated with (Centro Universitario adscrito a) the Western Europe University (www.westerneuropeuniversity.com).

FUNDING STATEMENT

Funding was neither sort nor received for this study.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARATION

No conflicts of interest were reported.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

- AW conceived the project,
- AW and FD contributed to the design and implementation of the research,
- AW produced the analysis and manuscript,
- AW and FD reviewed drafts and AI suggestions and both reviewed and approved the final manuscript.

AI STATEMENT

We acknowledge that AI was used in the writing of this paper and that the assist in writing went beyond a check of grammar and spelling. Specifically, AI (Claude.ai) was used to review and critique the paper after it had been developed, researched, written and spell checked by AW and FD. AI suggestions, if both authors agreed to integrate into the original paper, were then checked and validated by both authors.

REFERENCES

1. Palmer DD. The Science, art and philosophy of chiropractic. Portland, OR: Portland Printing House Company; 1910.
2. Stephenson RW. Chiropractic textbook. Davenport, IA: Palmer School of Chiropractic; 1927.
3. Wenban AB, Denis FL. Universal Intelligence in the philosophy of chiropractic: a comparative analysis. *Asia-Pacific Chiropr J*. 2026;6.3.
4. Schiller J. Vitalism. In: Dictionary of the history of ideas. Vol 4. New York: Scribner; 1973:486–490.
5. Bechtel W, Richardson RC. Vitalism. In: Sarkar S, Pfeifer J, eds. The philosophy of science: an encyclopedia. New York: Routledge; 2006:926–934.
6. Wolfe CT, Normandin S. Vitalism and the scientific image in post-enlightenment life science, 1800–

2010. Dordrecht: Springer; 2013.
7. Patton MQ. Qualitative research & evaluation methods: integrating theory and practice. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications; 2015.
8. Skinner Q. Meaning and understanding in the history of ideas. *History Theory*. 1969;8(1):3-53. DOI: 10.2307/2504188.
9. Mootz RD. Art, science and philosophy: enthusiasm and the untestable. *J Manipulative Physiol Ther*. 1992;15(8):542-545.
10. Donahue JH. Disease in our principles: the case against Innate Intelligence. *Am J Chiropr Med*. 1988;1(2):86-88.
11. Morgan L. Innate Intelligence: its origins and problems. *J Can Chiropr Assoc*. 1998;42(1):35-41.
12. Jackson RB. Vis mediatrix naturae, vital force to innate intelligence and concepts for 2000. *J Chiropr Humanit*. 2001;10:41-47.
13. Morinis EA. Theory and practice in chiropractic: an anthropological perspective. *J Can Chiropr Assoc*. 1980;24(3):114-119.
14. Kaptchuk TJ, Eisenberg DM. Chiropractic: origins, controversies, and contributions. *Arch Intern Med*. 1998;158(20):2215-2224.
15. McAulay BJ. Rigor in the philosophy of chiropractic: beyond the dismissivism/authoritarian polemic. *J Chiropr Humanit*. 2005;12:16-32.
16. Sinnott R. Sinnott's textbook of chiropractic philosophy. Frankfort, IL: Self-published; 2009.
17. Strang VV. Essential principles of chiropractic. Davenport: Palmer College of Chiropractic; 1984.
18. Janse J. Principles and practice of chiropractic. Lombard, IL: National College of Chiropractic; 1976.
19. Davis AJ. The physician. Vol 1 of The Great Harmonia. Boston: Mussey; 1850.
20. Palmer BJ. The Subluxation specific: the adjustment specific. Davenport, IA: Palmer School of Chiropractic; 1934.
21. Palmer BJ. Chiropractic clinical controlled research. Davenport, IA: Palmer School of Chiropractic; 1951.
22. Gold R. The triune of life. Marietta, GA: Si-Nel Publishing; 1984.
23. Strauss JB. Refined by fire: the evolution of straight chiropractic. Levittown, PA: Foundation for the Advancement of Chiropractic Education; 1991.
24. Palmer BJ. The bigness of the fellow within. Davenport, IA: Palmer School of Chiropractic; 1949.
25. Coulter ID. Chiropractic: a philosophy for alternative health care. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann; 1999.
26. Keating JC. Philosophy in chiropractic. In: Haldeman S, ed. Principles and practice of chiropractic. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill; 2005:77-98.
27. Keating JC. B.J. of Davenport: the early years of chiropractic. Davenport, IA: Association for the History of Chiropractic; 1997.
28. Koch DB. Contemporary chiropractic philosophy: An Introduction. Roswell, GA: Life University Press; 2008.
29. Senzon SA. Constructing a philosophy of chiropractic I: an integral map of the territory. *J Chiropr Humanit*. 2011;18(1):1-21. DOI: 10.1016/j.echu.2010.10.002
30. Richards DM. The meaning and value of vitalism in chiropractic [Dissertation]. Southern Cross University; 2020. <https://researchportal.scu.edu.au/esploro/outputs/doctoral/The-meaning-and-value-of-vitalism/991012904700402368>
31. Villanueva-Russell Y. Caught in the crosshairs: identity and cultural authority within chiropractic. *Soc Sci Med*. 2011;72(11):1826-1837. DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.03.038
32. Reggars JW. Chiropractic at the crossroads or are we just going around in circles? *Chiropr Man Ther*. 2011;19:11. DOI: 10.1186/2045-709X-19-11
33. Thornhill JT. A vitalism ethos and the chiropractic health care paradigm. *J Chiropr Humanit*. 2020;27:59-81. DOI: 10.1016/j.echu.2020.10.004
34. Simpson JK, Young KJ. Vitalism in contemporary chiropractic: a help or a hinderance? *Chiropr Man Ther*. 2020;28(1):35. DOI: 10.1186/s12998-020-00307-8
35. Good CJ. The great subluxation debate: a centrist's perspective. *J Chiropr Humanit*. 2010;17:33-39.

DOI: 10.1016/j.echu.2010.07.002

36. Keating JC. The meanings of Innate [Commentary]. J Can Chiropr Assoc. 2002;46(1):4-10.